

Civil War Timeline

1861

January 1861 – The South Secedes (*Vocab – secede (verb): to withdraw/break away/separate from political body*)

When Abraham Lincoln, a known opponent of slavery, was elected president, the South Carolina legislature perceived a threat. Calling a state convention, the delegates voted to remove the state of South Carolina from the United States of America. Six other Southern states also seceded.

February 1861 – The South Creates a Government

The seven states created the Confederate Constitution, a document similar to the United States Constitution, but with greater stress on the independence of each state. Jefferson Davis was named president of the Confederacy until elections could be held.

March 1861 – Lincoln's Inauguration

At Lincoln's inauguration, the new president said he had no plans to end slavery in those states where it already existed, but he also said he would not accept secession. He hoped to resolve the national crisis without warfare.

April 1861 – Attack on Fort Sumter

When President Lincoln planned to send supplies to Fort Sumter, a federal fort in South Carolina, he alerted the state in advance in an attempt to avoid hostilities. South Carolina asked the commander of the fort to surrender immediately. The commander offered to surrender, but only after he had exhausted his supplies. His offer was rejected, and the Civil War began with shots fired on the fort. Fort Sumter eventually was surrendered to South Carolina.

April 1861 – Four More States Join the Confederacy

The attack on Fort Sumter prompted four more states to join the other seven states in forming the Confederate States of America. Richmond, Virginia, was named the Confederate capitol.

June 1861 – West Virginia is Created

Residents of the western counties of Virginia did not wish to secede along with the rest of the state. This section of Virginia was admitted into the Union as the state of West Virginia on June 20, 1863.

June 1861 – Four Slave States Stay in the Union

Despite their acceptance of slavery, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri did not join the Confederacy. Although divided in their loyalties, a combination of political maneuvering and Union military pressure kept these states from seceding.

July 1861 – First Battle of Bull Run (Manassas)

Public demand pushed Union General Winfield Scott to advance on the South before adequately training his untried troops. Scott ordered General McDowell to advance on Confederate troops stationed at Manassas Junction, Virginia (just outside of Washington, DC). McDowell attacked and was initially successful, but the introduction of Confederate reinforcements resulted in a Southern victory and a chaotic retreat toward Washington by federal troops.

Go to: <http://www.history.com/videos/first-battle-of-bull-run#first-battle-of-bull-run> (video is embedded on Civil War page of wiki)

➡Which side (Union or Confederacy) won?

How was each side affected by the outcome? (Write responses below...)

➡Union -

➡Confederacy -

Union forces fought hard to keep the key states of Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri as part of the United States. Why do you think each important to Union forces? (Look at the strategy map below & give it a try. We'll discuss in class as well.)

➡Maryland (hint: what if Maryland also joined the Confederacy?) -

➡Kentucky and Missouri (hint: think about strategy/look at the rivers!) -

1862

April 1862 – *The Battle of Shiloh*

On April 6, Confederate forces attacked Union forces under General Ulysses S. Grant at Shiloh, Tennessee. By the end of the day, the federal troops were almost defeated. Yet, during the night, reinforcements arrived, and by the next morning the Union commanded the field. When Confederate forces retreated, the exhausted federal forces did not follow. Casualties were heavy — 13,000 out of 63,000 Union soldiers died, and 11,000 of 40,000 Confederate troops were killed.

September 1862 – *Battle of Antietam*

Watch this 2.5 minute video: <http://www.history.com/videos/the-battle-of-antietam#the-battle-of-antietam> (embedded on wiki)

➡ Gen. Robert E. Lee led his Confederate army in an invasion into what Union state?

➡ The Battle of Antietam was one of the bloodiest days of the war. How many soldiers died? How did casualty rates compare on each side?

➡ Which side was forced to withdraw?

The battle convinced the British and French — who were considering official recognition of the Confederacy — to reserve action. **This is the opening scene of *Glory*.**

1863

January 1863 – *The Emancipation Proclamation*

In an effort to calm slave-holding border states, Lincoln resisted the demands of radical Republicans for complete abolition. Lincoln, aware of the public's growing support of abolition, issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that all slaves in areas **in rebellion** were, in the eyes of the federal government, free. This did not end slavery in the 5 Union states that still allowed slavery!

April-July 1863 – *The Vicksburg Campaign*

Union General Grant began a siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi, the city essential to the Union's plans to regain control of the Mississippi River. After six weeks, the Confederate General surrendered, giving up the city and 30,000 men. Shortly thereafter, the Mississippi River was in Union hands and the Union had achieved one of its major goals - the Confederacy was split in two.

June – July 1863 – *The Gettysburg Campaign*

Watch this 2.5 minute video: <http://www.history.com/videos/the-battle-of-gettysburg#the-battle-of-gettysburg> (embedded on wiki)

➡ After several victories for his Confederate Army, Gen. Lee moved his forces to invade the North. What did he hope this would achieve?

➡ In what state did the Battle of Gettysburg take place?

➡ How did the battle turn out?

This battle is also significant because it ended Confederate hopes of formal recognition by foreign governments. On November 19, President Lincoln dedicated a portion of the Gettysburg battlefield as a national cemetery, and delivered his memorable "Gettysburg Address."

1864

Spring 1864 – *Ulysses S. Grant in Command*

In part due to Gen. Grant's great success at Vicksburg, in 1864 Lincoln named him commander of the entire Union army. Grant was known for using harsh battle strategies and tactics that generally aimed to wear down the Confederacy by destroying transportation routes and crops, cutting off food and weapons supplies, and inflicting heavy casualties. He launched three major offensives, pursued Lee's army and sought to capture Richmond, the Confederate capital. Grant started his offensive with 118,000 men; by early June, half of his men were casualties. But Lee's army had been reduced by a third to 40,000 men.

November 1864 – General William T. Sherman’s March to the Sea

William Tecumseh Sherman was Grant’s second in command. While Grant led an army in pursuit of Lee’s forces in Virginia, he sent Sherman to destroy the Confederate forces in Georgia.

Click this link to read about Sherman and Dolly Sumner Lunt: <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/sherman.htm>

➡After Sherman won Atlanta, Georgia, he first tried to take the surrounding areas through traditional battle tactics. When this did not work, what alternative strategy did he adopt?

➡Briefly describe Sherman’s “march to the sea” from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia.



Sherman “necktie”

➡Read the journal entry from Dolly Sumner Lunt. She describes her experiences when Sherman’s army marched through her plantation. List three injustices she describes the Union soldiers (Yankees) committing.

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November 1864 – Abraham Lincoln is Re-Elected

The Republican party nominated President Abraham Lincoln as its presidential candidate. Sherman’s victory in Atlanta boosted Lincoln’s popularity and helped him win re-election by a wide margin.

1865

January 1865 – The Fall of the Confederacy

Transportation problems and successful blockades caused severe shortages of food and supplies in the South. Starving soldiers began to desert Lee’s forces, and although President Jefferson Davis approved the arming of slaves as a means of augmenting the shrinking army, the measure was never put into effect.

February 1865 – Sherman Marches through North and South Carolina

Union General Sherman moved from Georgia through South Carolina, destroying almost everything in his path.

April 1865 – Richmond Falls

General Lee attacked General Grant’s forces near Petersburg, but was defeated. Lee evacuated Richmond, the Confederate capital, and headed west to join with other forces.

April 1865 – Surrender at Appomattox Courthouse

General Lee’s troops were soon surrounded, and Grant called upon Lee to surrender. On April 9, the two commanders met at Appomattox Courthouse, and agreed on the terms of surrender. Lee’s men were sent home on parole — soldiers with their horses, and officers with their side arms. All other equipment was surrendered.

April 1865 – The Assassination of President Lincoln

On April 14, as President Lincoln was watching a performance at Ford’s Theater in Washington, DC, he was shot by John Wilkes Booth, an actor from Maryland obsessed with avenging the Confederate defeat. Lincoln died the next morning. Booth escaped to Virginia. Eleven days later, cornered in a burning barn, Booth was fatally shot by a Union soldier. Nine other people were involved in the assassination; four were hanged, four imprisoned, and one acquitted.

The map below shows the progress of the War from 1861-1865. **Neatly label and/or circle** all of the major battles listed on this timeline (shown in *italics* on your timeline - you should label 6 in total) from your timeline on the bottom map. In some cases, you will need to draw in the battle location (ex. Bull Run is not located on this map, but Vicksburg is). Go to the Diversity/Equality page of the wiki to view helpful battle maps.



As you read/watch/draw, think about questions you have and write them here!

